



**City of  
Fort Collins**  
Cultural  
Services

# FORT FUND GRANT GUIDELINES

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[fcgov.com/fortfund](http://fcgov.com/fortfund)

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## **Introduction**

The Fort Fund Grant Program supports projects and activities that provide arts and cultural programming to the Fort Collins community and visitors. Established in 1989, the program distributes lodging tax revenues deposited in the City’s Cultural Development and Programming Account and the Tourism Programming Account in accordance with the provisions of Section 25-244 of the City Code.

Fort Fund grants support nonprofit arts, cultural and tourism events that enrich the creative vitality of the community, promote local heritage and diversity, and provide opportunities for arts and cultural participation. The grants help support Fort Collins as a creative center and tourist destination and promote the health and well-being of all residents and visitors. Applications are reviewed by the City Council-appointed Cultural Resources Board before being submitted and recommended to the Fort Collins City Council for final approval. Once the City Council approves the funding recommendations, applicants are notified of the decision via email.

Applicants for the Fort Fund Grant Program must thoroughly read the guidelines and application instructions before beginning the application process to ensure they meet program eligibility and requirements. Applicants are required to be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or apply under a 501(c)3 nonprofit fiscal sponsor. Cultural Services Department staff are available for consultation to assist organizations in selecting the most appropriate grant category. The Fort Fund Guidelines are adopted by the Cultural Resources Board, in alignment with the FoCo Creates Arts and Culture Masterplan to create an efficient application and review process, as well as maintain a level of accountability and integrity for the allocation of public funds. The program guidelines are reviewed periodically throughout the year and any changes are adopted by the Cultural Resources Board and approved by the City Manager.

## **Overview of Grant Categories**

Cultural Services Department staff is available for consultation to assist organizations in selecting the most appropriate grant category. Specific deadlines can be found at [fcgov.com/fortfund](http://fcgov.com/fortfund).

### **Special Event Grant**

**January & July Deadline**

The Special Event Grant category offers funding for single arts, cultural and/or tourism events that last for no more than three consecutive days. Funding requests may range from \$2,000-\$7,500. Eligible applicants must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been operating for at least one (1) year prior to the application deadline or apply under a fiscal sponsor. The event must take place within Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property. Applicants must show a 1:1 cash/in-kind match based on the event budget. Applicants may apply for the Special Event Grant once in a calendar year. Applicants applying for the Special Event Grant are not eligible to apply for the Program Support Grant but may additionally apply for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant. **Please see page 4 for details of program information, eligibility and evaluation criteria.**

### **Program Support Grant**

**March & September Deadline**

The Program Support Grant category offers funding for arts and cultural programs that last over a period of at least four days or multiple programs throughout an extended period of time. Funding requests may be up to 30% of the specific program budget, not to exceed \$30,000. Eligible applicants must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been operating for at least three (3) years prior to the application deadline or apply under a fiscal sponsor. The program must take place within Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property. Applicants must show a 1:1 cash/in-kind match based on the event budget. Applicants may apply for the Program Support Grant once in a calendar year. Applicants applying for the Program Support Grant are not eligible to apply for the Special Event Grant but may additionally apply for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant. **Please see page 6 for details of program information, eligibility and evaluation criteria.**

### **Cross-Sector Impact Grant**

**October Deadline**

The Cross-Sector Impact Grant offers funding for projects that promote the integration of arts and culture with other sectors to enhance the health and well-being of the community. The grant encourages collaboration between arts organizations and other sectors to achieve this objective. Projects can be a single day event or a multi-day program. Funding requests may range from \$2,000-\$7,500. Eligible applicants must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been operating for at least one (1) year prior to the application deadline or apply under a fiscal sponsor. The project must take place within Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property. Applicants must show a 1:1 cash/in-kind match based on the event budget. Applicants applying for the Cross-Sector Impact Grant are eligible to apply for either the Special Event Grant or the Program Support Grant. **Please see page 8 for details of program information, eligibility and evaluation criteria.**

\*Minimum Requirements for fiscal sponsors can be found on page 11.

\*\*For a list of organizations and projects that will NOT be funded, please see page 12.

## **Special Event Grant**

### **Purpose**

The Special Event Grant is intended to provide assistance for single community-based arts, cultural and/or tourism projects that are integral to the cultural ecosystem that defines Fort Collins as a center for creative expression and cultural tourism. This grant is particularly suitable for unique one-time events, first-time applicants, individuals and/or groups applying under a fiscal sponsor, and tourism events. Applicants who apply for a Special Event Grant are not eligible to apply for a Program Support Grant but may additionally apply for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants must meet all the following requirements:

- Be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in existence for at least one (1) year prior to the application deadline or apply under a fiscal sponsor. (Fiscal sponsor requirements can be found on page 11.)
- Event must be held in Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property.
- Event may not span more than three consecutive days.
- Event may occur no earlier than sixty (60) days after the application deadline.
- Event must be open to the public.
- Event or activity must provide a direct public benefit to Fort Collins residents and/or visitors.
- Have artistic, administrative and management leadership (professional or volunteer) capable of completing the proposed project.
- The applicant organization must be in good standing with the Fort Fund Grant Program.

### **Funding Requests**

Applicants for the Special Event Grant category may request funding ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,500. The awarded funds must be shown in the project budget and used for the specific activities detailed in the funding application.

### **Matching Funds**

Applicants must provide a 1:1 cash/in-kind match for all contract awards indicated in the project budget. In-kind support at a true market value may account for up to half (50%) of the required match and must be documented.

### **Eligible Expenses for Funding**

The eligible expenses for the Special Event Grant include production costs, artistic fees, project coordination (including staffing), audience development, outreach and marketing, and other direct costs that are relevant to the project described in the funding application. Please refer to page 12 for a list of activities, organizations, and costs that are not eligible for funding.

## **Special Event Grant Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation of Special Event Grant applications will be based on the following criteria with a maximum score of 100 points. To be recommended for funding, the application must achieve a minimum score of 75 points. Each of the three evaluation criteria sections must be addressed in the proposal. The criteria used to evaluate Special Event Grant applications are as follows:

### *Project Design: 50 Points*

- Are the proposed project activities reasonably planned and thoughtfully crafted?
- Is the project budget appropriate and reasonable?

### *Administrative Capability: 20 Points*

- Does the applicant demonstrate artistic skills needed to complete the proposed programming/project?
- Does the applicant demonstrate administrative skills needed to complete the proposed programming/project?

### *Community, Cultural and Social Impact: 30 Points*

- Does the proposed event provide a direct public benefit?
- Is the proposed programming accessible to audiences, including individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged individuals, and/or historically underserved communities?
- Does the project provide a measurable economic contribution throughout the community, including expansion of tourism, employment of local artists, and/or the leveraging of dollars?

## **Program Support Grant**

### **Purpose**

The Project Support Grant category funds programs that deliver diverse arts and cultural experiences for the greater community and visitors. The grant aims to support programming that reflects the diversity of the Fort Collins community, fosters innovation, enhances accessibility to the arts, and promotes cultural vibrancy. This category is ideal for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with year-long programming and/or a series of events spread over a period of time. Applicants who apply for a Program Support Grant are not eligible to apply for a Special Event Grant but may additionally apply for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants must meet all the following requirements:

- Be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in existence for at least three (3) years with a history of arts and/or cultural programming prior to the application deadline or have a fiscal sponsor. (Fiscal sponsor requirements can be found on page 11.)
- Program must be held in Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property.
- Program must last over a period of at least four days or have multiple programs throughout an extended period of time.
- Program may occur no earlier than sixty (60) days after the application deadline.
- Program must be open to the public.
- Program or activities must provide a direct public benefit to Fort Collins residents and/or visitors.
- Have artistic, administrative and management leadership (professional or volunteer) capable of completing the proposed project.
- The applicant organization must be in good standing with the Fort Fund Grant Program.

### **Funding Requests**

Applicants for the Program Support Grant category may request funding up to 30% of the specific program budget, not to exceed \$30,000. The awarded funds must be shown in the program budget and used for the specific activities detailed in the funding application.

### **Matching Funds**

Applicants must provide a 1:1 cash/in-kind match for all contract awards indicated in the program budget. In-kind support at a true market value may account for up to a quarter (25%) of the required match and must be documented.

### **Eligible Expenses for Funding**

Eligible expenses under the Project Support Grant include production costs, artistic fees, project coordination (including staffing), audience development, outreach and marketing, as well as other direct costs related to the project described in the application. Please refer to page 12 for a list of specific organizations, activities and costs that are not eligible for support.

## **Program Support Grant Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation of Program Support Grant applications will be based on the following criteria with a maximum score of 100 points. To be recommended for funding, the application must achieve a minimum score of 75 points. Each of the three evaluation criteria sections must be addressed in the proposal. The criteria used to evaluate Program Support Grant applications are as follows:

### *Project Design: 40 Points*

- Are the proposed program activities reasonably planned and thoughtfully crafted?
- Do the proposed program activities bring a unique artistic element to the community?
- Does the proposed programming/project engage professional artists and/or culture bearers?
- Is the project budget appropriate and reasonable?
- Does the project budget show a variety of financial sources to successfully accomplish the proposed project?

### *Administrative Capability: 20 Points*

- Does the applicant demonstrate artistic skills needed to complete the proposed programming/project?
- Does the applicant demonstrate administrative and leadership skills needed to complete the proposed programming/project?
- Does the applicant have a history of administrative stability and successful project management?
- Does the applicant conduct program evaluations and measure program/project effectiveness?
- Does the applicant collect data regarding audience demographics, audience involvement and tourists in attendance?

### *Community, Cultural and Social Impact: 40 Points*

- Does the proposed event(s) provide a direct public benefit?
- Does the proposed activity market to a broad constituency, including residents, visitors and tourists?
- Does the proposed programming expand the opportunities for residents, visitors and tourists to actively participate and engage in Fort Collins' arts and cultural life?
- Is the proposed programming accessible to audiences, including individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged individuals, and/or historically underserved communities?
- Does the project provide a measurable economic contribution throughout the community, including expansion of tourism, employment of local artists, and/or the leveraging of dollars?

## **Cross-Sector Impact Grant**

### **Purpose**

The Cross-Sector Impact Grant supports collaborative work between different sectors to improve the community's health and well-being through arts and culture. This program recognizes the value of partnership across sectors, which can result in new opportunities, increased effectiveness, and greater impact in collective endeavors. Projects that demonstrate a high level of collaboration between organizations are the priority of this grant category. The grant is open to all art and culture forms and supports partnership projects that benefit Fort Collins residents and visitors. Eligible projects will focus on "Arts & ..." themes such as arts and environment, arts and lifelong learning, arts and health, etc. Projects can be single or multi-day events/programs. Applicants who apply for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant are also eligible to apply for either a Special Event Grant or a Program Support Grant.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants applying for a Cross-Sector Impact Grant must provide written proof of a partnership agreement between the two parties collaborating on the proposed project. The organization applying for funding must meet all the following requirements:

- Be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in existence for at least one (1) year or have a fiscal sponsor. (Fiscal sponsor requirements can be found on page 11.)
- Event(s) must be held in Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Growth Management Area, or at a City of Fort Collins owned property.
- Event(s) may occur no earlier than sixty (60) days after the application deadline.
- Event(s) must be open to the public.
- Event(s) or activities must provide a direct public benefit to Fort Collins residents and/or visitors.
- The applicant organization must be in good standing with the Fort Fund Grant Program.

At least one partner is required to have artistic, administrative and management leadership (professional or volunteer) capable of completing the proposed project.

### **Funding Requests**

Applicants for the Cross-Sector Impact Grant category may request funding ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,500. The awarded funds must be shown in the project budget and used for the specific activities detailed in the funding application.

### **Matching Funds**

Applicants must provide a 1:1 cash match for all contract awards indicated in the project budget. In-kind support at a true market value may account for up to half (50%) of the required match and must be documented.

### **Eligible Expenses for Funding**

The eligible expenses for the Cross-Sector Impact Grant include program costs, artistic fees, project coordination (including staffing), outreach and marketing, and other direct costs that are relevant to the project described in the funding application. Please refer to page 12 for a list of activities, organizations and costs that are not eligible for funding.



## **Cross-Sector Impact Grant Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation of Cross-Sector Impact Grant applications will be based on the following criteria with a maximum score of 100 points. To be recommended for funding, the application must achieve a minimum score of 75 points. Each of the three evaluation criteria sections must be addressed in the proposal. The criteria used to evaluate Cross-Sector Impact Grant applications are as follows:

### *Project Design: 30 Points*

- Are the proposed project activities reasonably planned and thoughtfully crafted?
- Does the application strongly communicate the intended outcome of the project?
- Is the project budget appropriate and reasonable?
- Does the project budget show a variety of financial sources to successfully accomplish the proposed project?

### *Administrative Capability and Collaborative Partnership: 20 Points*

- Does the application indicate a strong level of cooperation, collaboration and co-creation between applicant and partnering individual(s)/organization.
- Does the applicant have a history of administrative stability and successful project management?
- Does the applicant conduct program evaluations and measure program/project effectiveness?
- Does the applicant collect data regarding audience demographics, audience involvement and tourists in attendance?

### *Community, Cultural and Social Impact: 50 Points*

- Does the proposed activity clearly address one or more social/community benefit and bring together a range of partners (e.g., health, education, the sciences, environment, lifelong learning, etc.)?
- Does the proposed activity market to a broad constituency, including residents, visitors and tourists?
- Is the proposed programming accessible to audiences, including individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged individuals, and/or historically underserved communities?

## **Funding Process**

Requests for funding typically exceed available funding sources. Applicants are encouraged to request a reasonable amount based on their proposed project budget, but it is rare for an award amount to match the full request. Final funding distribution depends on various factors, including projected program funding, number of applications and applicant score.

The Cultural Resources Board evaluates and scores each application based on published criteria for each program. Applications are not evaluated against each other, but rather on their own merit. The Cultural Resources Board utilizes Olympic scoring which objectively ranks applications by score. The Board makes a funding recommendation to the Fort Collins City Council, and applicants are notified of the decision via email following City Council approval.

Organizations that are approved for funding are issued a legally binding contract between the City of Fort Collins and the recipient of the funds. All contracts must be signed before the issuance of funds. Contractual requirements include:

- 1:1 cash/in-kind match.
- Requirement for funds to be used for direct costs of the event(s) within the time frame specified within the contract or returned immediately to the Cultural Services Department.
- If the event changes significantly, the Cultural Services Department must be notified in writing. Any changes must be approved by the City prior to implementation. Funding for the event may be re-evaluated at that time.
- Funded organizations will post all City-funded events and projects on the arts calendar at [www.visitftcollins.com/events/submit-an-event](http://www.visitftcollins.com/events/submit-an-event)
- Funded organizations will acknowledge the City's support, including the Fort Fund logo, in all appropriate materials and media.
- Funded organizations will verbally acknowledge credit to the City of Fort Collins Fort Fund when such announcements are made for any sponsors at the event(s).
- Funded organizations will submit some or all of the following:
  - Mid-Year Report
  - Final Report
  - Tourism Impact Form
  - Proof of Fort Fund logo use
  - Project budgets
  - Organization budgets
- Members of the Cultural Resources Board are assigned to each grantee to act as a liaison between funded organizations and the Board. Two complimentary admissions should be provided by the grantee organization to the funded event for this purpose.

## **Fiscal Sponsor Requirements**

A **fiscal sponsor** is a nonprofit organization that assumes all fiduciary and contractual responsibilities so an individual artist or unincorporated group may receive funding from the City.

Fiscally sponsored projects do not count toward application limits for the fiscal sponsor organization. Colorado State University organizations are required to submit their applications through the Sponsored Programs Office.

*All fiscal sponsors must adhere to the following requirements in addition to the eligibility requirements of the grant.*

Fiscal sponsors must:

- Be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Fort Collins or the Fort Collins Growth Management Area.
- Be in existence for at least three (3) years prior to the application deadline.
- Have an active volunteer Board of Directors that meets at least three (3) times a year.
- Have a salaried, professional Executive Director.
- Have at least a \$50,000 annual operating budget as evidenced by the most recently completed IRS Form 990.

**Fiscal sponsors that apply on behalf of groups or individuals as the fiduciary agency must take on the legal responsibilities to carry out the contract.** The City of Fort Collins directly contracts with the fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor is responsible for all administration, financial management, reporting, and any other responsibilities associated with the completion of the project. Failure to comply with fiduciary responsibilities, contract compliance, and/or contract management requirements may result in loss of eligibility to serve as a fiscal sponsor. Examples of failing to meet sponsorship requirements include but are not limited to failure to review application materials for completeness and accuracy prior to submitting to the City, or turning in late and/or incomplete applications, contract materials, and/or final reports.

The fiscal sponsor may charge up to 10% of the award amount as a sponsorship fee for serving as a fiscal agent in all applicable funding programs. Sponsored project activities must be independent and separate from the general activities of the fiscal sponsor. Applications for sponsored projects may not be for an extension of an organization's regular programs and/or services, nor may a sponsored project be used to fund activities, events or services put on or provided by the fiscal sponsor. Applicable professional services provided by the fiscal sponsor may be considered as eligible expenses with written approval from Cultural Services Department staff.

## **Ineligible Organizations and Activities**

The City of Fort Collins will NOT award grants to or for:

- Event(s) not intended for the general public
- Governmental agencies or public authorities (exception: Library Districts)
- Event(s) that primarily benefit a for-profit business or for-profit activity
- Foundations with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations/individuals (exception: foundations serving as a fiscal sponsor)
- Religious or sectarian programming, or programming/services solely for the promotion or consumption by a specific religious order or sect
- School programs traditionally part of the academic curriculum, curriculum development or curricular activities
- Scholarly or academic research, tuition, and activities that generate academic credit or formal study toward an academic or professional degree
- Publication of manuscripts or compositions not created as part of a grant-supported project
- Costs associated with the start-up of a new organization
- Grant management costs, grant writing fees, application preparation costs, sponsorship fees, or any other grant preparation and management fees
- Fundraiser(s) or private event(s) whose primary focus is to raise money
- Cash reserves or endowments of any kind, including funds to reduce existing deficits
- Capital expenditures, including construction, renovation, or purchase of real property
- Previously completed activities or costs incurred before the start of the funded project
- Food or beverages for hospitality
- Computer software/hardware
- Awards, cash prizes, contributions or donations
- Entry fees for competitions
- Travel expenses, including transportation/mileage/lodging/meals (exception: student bus travel)